AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain(s) under examination in the application is presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Those claims not cancelled or withdrawn but amended by the current amendment utilize the following notations for amendment: 1. deleted matter is shown by strikethrough for six or more characters and double brackets for five or fewer characters; and 2. added matter is shown by underlining.

12. (Currently Amended) A laser apparatus for material treatment, comprising:

a source of laser radiation providing pulsed laser radiation; and

a ~~variable~~ deflecting device, which directs said laser radiation into the material at different, selectable locations to generate optical breakthroughs; and

a pulse picking device that changes selected laser pulses of the pulsed laser radiation, with regard to at least one optical parameter of said pulsed laser radiation, such that the changed laser pulses cannot generate optical breakthroughs, wherein the pulse picking device influences said selected laser pulses such that only a remaining subset of not selected laser pulses can cause optical breakthroughs in the material.

13. (Original) The laser apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the pulse picking device changes non-sequential laser pulses, which are substantially equidistant in time according to a selection frequency.

14. (Original) The laser apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the pulse picking device changes the laser pulses at least with regard to one parameter selected from a group consisting of: phase, amplitude, polarization, propagation direction, and beam profile.

15. (Original) The laser apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the pulse picking device comprises at least one structure selected from a group consisting of an acousto-optic modulator, a Pockels' cell, a fiber-optics switching element and a chopper wheel.

16. (Original) The laser apparatus as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a control device which synchronously controls the pulse picking device and the deflecting device.

17. (Original) The laser apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the control device controls the pulse picking device and the deflecting device to generate the optical breakthroughs along a predetermined path.

18. (Original) The laser apparatus as claimed in Claim 17, wherein if an actual deflection speed of the deflecting device approaches a maximum deflection speed, the control device increases the selection frequency and, in accordance therewith, decreases the actual deflection speed.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of material treatment by laser radiation, comprising

generating pulsed laser radiation;

variably deflecting the pulsed laser radiation into the material to generate optical breakthroughs; and

changing selected laser pulses of the pulsed laser radiation, with regard to an optical parameter of said pulsed laser radiation, such that the changed laser pulses no longer generate optical breakthroughs, wherein only a remaining subset of not selected laser pulses can cause optical breakthroughs in the material.

20. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 19, further comprising selecting non-sequential laser pulses, which are substantially equidistant in time, to be changed according to a selection frequency.

21. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the laser pulses are changed at least with regard to one parameter selected from a group consisting of: phase, amplitude, polarization, propagation direction, and beam profile.

22. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 20, further comprising deflecting the laser radiation and the change in the selected laser pulses in a synchronized manner.

23. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 19, further comprising controlling the deflection of the laser radiation and the picking of the laser pulses to cause optical breakthroughs to form along a predetermined path in the material.

24. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 23, further comprising, if an actual deflection speed of said deflection comes close to a maximum deflection speed, increasing the selection frequency, and in accordance therewith, decreasing the actual deflection speed.